

## Carol A. Bernstein, 137th President, 2010–2011

Carolyn B. Robinowitz, M.D.

**I**t is my honor and privilege to introduce Dr. Carol Bernstein, 137th President of the American Psychiatric Association.

In 2010 in New Orleans, Dr. Carol Nadelson informed us of Dr. Bernstein's life and accomplishments—how it seemed as if everything in her life experience and education prepared her for this position. Those of us who have observed and interacted with Carol this year can easily attest that she has more than exceeded our expectations.

Carol was born when her father was a medical student. The family moved frequently during her father's residency training (seven times in her first 7 years). Carol attended three different kindergartens. Early on, she showed resilience as she coped with changing circumstances and environments and demonstrated the forerunners of the comfortable gregariousness present in her adult interactions.

Her ambitions were shaped by her parents. Her father, a cardiologist, consistently demonstrated his love of science and clinical care, while her mother, a devoted stay-at-home mom who had been a teacher, stressed the importance of education and an intellectual life.

Of course Carol was a good student and a star in high school, where she achieved her life's dream of being chosen as a cheerleader, another role that has continued in more intellectual and sophisticated ways in her psychiatric career.

Dr. Bernstein has spoken often about the cultural changes affecting our profession. Her years at Bryn Mawr College in the late 1960s gave her a taste of living within a university cultural sea change. She describes matriculating wearing French heels and having afternoon tea, then graduating to dissidence, demonstrations, and the new and exciting directions of the sixties. This contrast was enhanced by her junior-year experiences abroad in Israel and Spain, spanning both war and civil rights protests.

Following graduation, she completed a Master's of Arts in education at Antioch, focusing on community organizing. She then went to Canada and worked as a social work assistant in the psychiatry and emergency departments at McMaster University. There, senior clinicians recognized her talent and allowed her to participate in long-term therapy supervision with the psychiatry residents and encouraged her to pursue a medical career.

After receiving her M.D. from Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons, she began a medical

residency. Dr. Stuart Yudofsky encouraged her growing interest in psychiatry. She was also interviewed by Dr. John Oldham. She completed her psychiatry residency at Columbia, joining the faculty and being promoted to Assistant Director of Medical Student Education in Psychiatry and Associate Director of Residency Training.

At Columbia, Carol was known as a caring and devoted mentor. Many of her students went on to become faculty and APA leaders themselves. But as she commented, "sometimes you have to leave where you grew up to truly grow up," and in 1993, she became Residency Director in Psychiatry at NYU/Bellevue, transforming and energizing the residency, increasing its stature and competitiveness, and nurturing a new generation of aspiring psychiatrists. She also has served more than a decade at NYU as Vice Chair for Education in Psychiatry and Associate Dean for Graduate Medical Education and Designated Institutional Officer for GME. In the midst of her presidential duties this year, she presided over a very successful institutional site review at NYU.

Carol's involvement in APA began in her district branch and the Assembly. Then President Herb Pardes appointed her to the Committee on Medical Student Education, and from then on it was nonstop service and leadership. In addition to her many committee appointments, she was elected to the Board of Trustees and served as Vice President as well as two terms as Treasurer during a time of great financial stress, leading the APA to a more robust and stable fiscal state. She also was elected to the Board of the American Association of Directors of Psychiatric Residency Training and recently was elected to the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education, one of very few psychiatrists to receive that honor and responsibility.

Carol speaks frequently about work-life balance, and her career provides a model for its achievement. Carol met her husband, Arthur Myerson, during an ABPN oral examination, where she was a first-time examiner and he was a senior examiner assigned to orient her. Their marriage was a product of this collaboration of mentorship!

The arrival of Samantha (sharing a birthday with Arthur) brought much joy as well as an opportunity to demonstrate this balance. Carol continued her work for APA while bringing a 6-week old Samy to the APA components meetings, lugging both a carriage and a brief case on the train. Similarly, Samy's first APA meeting was the 1997 Institute on Psychiatric Services. Four months old, she received a member-in-diapers badge. Carol, Arthur, and Samantha have been a visible triumvirate at psychiatric meetings ever since. They have managed very busy professional and personal lives while always finding time for

Samanatha—the joy of their lives—and her many activities: music and dance, school plays, the swim team, and horseback riding. Samy's interest in becoming a veterinarian reflects her parents' focus on care taking as well as her love of animals.

This same close personal-professional interaction can be seen between Carol and her brother Michael, who demonstrates the family commitment to education through his work as Vice President and Provost at Tulane University, and her sister Janet, a professional artist and successful businesswoman.

Carol is also proud of her nieces, Claire and Eleanor, who just graduated from college Thursday (the one time that APA actually interfered with Carol's being present at a family function). There have been sad personal book ends to Carol's presidential year. Just before she began her presidential term, her father, Stanley Bernstein, was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer and, after a courageous year of treatment, died only a few weeks ago.

APA has been blessed with Carol's skilled leadership: her ability to use her energy, intellect, and superb interpersonal skills in her work. Just as she matured from dissident student to nationally recognized educator and mentor, so has she demonstrated the maturity and wisdom needed to lead APA in the challenges of our environment: the impact of the recession, the promise of legislation promoting parity and access to care, and changes in health care delivery.

Carol's understanding of leadership and administration as well as substance and her goal-directed perseverance led to her being one of the most productive presidents in my 35-year memory. She has been an effective voice for our profession in Congress, with medical colleagues and with the public. She has withstood harsh criticisms without overpersonalizing, recognizing that if everyone is happy, you probably are not doing something that needs to be done. She has not been deterred by the desire of organizations to avoid the potential pain of change, nor has she settled for easy solutions that seem to satisfy without solving problems. Her dedication to our younger members and her creative focus on the future have been extraordinary.

She has brought her lifelong experience and talents as an organizer, clinician, educator, administrator, and therapist as well as her warmth, humor, and caring to lead and to serve, and we at APA are the stronger for it.

Please join me in welcoming and thanking our President, Carol Bernstein.

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Presented at the 164th Annual Meeting of the American Psychiatric Association, Honolulu, May 14–18, 2011. Dr. Robinowitz, 134th President of the American Psychiatric Association, is a former Dean of the Georgetown University School of Medicine and currently is in private practice of adult, child, and adolescent psychiatry. Address correspondence to Dr. Robinowitz, 5225 Connecticut Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20015; carolynrobinowitz@usa.net (e-mail).

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